

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-29 (canceled)

30. (currently amended) A method for producing a high-molecular weight flocculant comprising the step of:

hydrolyzing ~~hydrolysing~~ a high-molecular weight polymeric material ~~containing~~ having at least one cyano groups ~~to thereby converting~~ at least a portion of the said at least one cyano groups into at least one carbamoyl groups.

31. (currently amended) The method ~~for producing a high-molecular flocculant as claimed in~~ according to claim 30 wherein said ~~hydrolysis is carried out in one step~~ hydrolyzing step occurs in the presence of an acidic catalyst.

32. (currently amended) The method ~~for producing a high-molecular flocculant as claimed in~~ according to claim 30, ~~wherein said hydrolysis~~ hydrolyzing step further comprises the steps of ~~is carried out in two steps, namely a first step (a) employing an acidic catalyst; and a second step of (b) employing a basic catalyst, and wherein, in said second step, a further portion of the~~ said at least one carbamoyl groups is converted into at least one carboxylic groups or salts thereof.

33. (currently amended) The ~~high-molecular flocculant as claimed in method~~ according to claim 30 wherein a said high-molecular weight polymeric material containing comprises acrylonitrile as a monomer unit ~~is used as the high-molecular material.~~

34. (currently amended) The ~~high-molecular flocculant as claimed in method~~ according to claim 33 30 wherein said polymeric material is selected from the group consisting ~~at least one selected from the group~~ of acrylic fibers, nitrite resins, styrene-acrylonitrile resins, acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene resins, acrylonitrile-styrene-acrylic resins, acrylonitrile-chlorinated polyethylene-styrene resins, nitrite rubbers and acrylonitrile-butadiene rubbers ~~is used as said high-molecular material.~~

35. (currently amended) The ~~high-molecular flocculant as claimed in method~~ according to claim 30 wherein a ~~high-molecular~~ said polymeric material containing comprises at least one cyano group wherein said at least one cyano group comprises not less than 15 mol % of the total monomer units present in said polymeric material ~~is used as said high-molecular material.~~

Claims 36-39 (canceled)